

Waste Minimization in Arizona -- It's Working!

The quantity of hazardous waste generated decreased 52% from 22,365 tons in 1992 to 10,845 tons in 1996. At the same time the gross state product (GSP) for mining, manufacturing, and utilities increased 44% from \$14,513,000 to \$20,916,000. The most recent year for which complete data is available is 1996.

Arizona's Omnibus Hazardous Waste Act of 1991 (House Bill 2121) established a policy to reduce toxic substances used and hazardous waste generated in Arizona, and required the director to establish a numeric goal for waste minimization by January 1, 1994.

The department worked with people from industry, mining, government, environmental groups, and the public to evaluate and set the waste minimization goal. After reviewing various reporting requirements, the group decided to track the Facility Annual Report of the hazardous waste produced on site from production process or service activities.

To account for economic growth and increased production, the stakeholder group indexed tons of hazardous waste to gross state product in millions of dollars for manufacturing, mining and utilities, compiled by the Arizona Department of Commerce.

The waste minimization goal is a 25% reduction in the amount of hazardous waste generated in Arizona per unit of GSP in the year 2000, compared to the base year of 1992. The goal is reported annually through the year 2000.

Combining these numbers, the indexed hazardous waste decreased 66% in Arizona from 1992 through 1996! This well exceeds the goal, which was set at 25%. The department encourages reduction by requiring pollution prevention plans and reports, and by providing helpful information, workshops, training and newsletters. The department also supports the Arizona Partnership for Pollution Prevention.

However, Arizona companies, and not the department, made the changes that reduced hazardous waste. The Department recognizes and appreciates their efforts.

Toxic Use Reduction Goal for Arizona is Also Set

Arizona Revised Statutes §49-963A. also required the director to establish a numeric goal for toxic use reduction by January 1, 1999. In 1998, the Pollution Prevention Unit again assembled a stakeholder group to establish a toxic use reduction goal.

Representatives included industry, government, and the general public. Mining and metallurgical operations are specifically exempt in the law, so were not included.

The stakeholder group reviewed current reporting mechanisms including the Toxic Release Inventory (Form R) and the Facility Annual Report. They decided that the Pollution Prevention Plans received from industry would provide the best tracking for this purpose.

A facility's Pollution Prevention Plan identifies opportunities to reduce the use of toxic substances. The facilities then set these opportunities as plan goals that they commit to implement within a certain time frame.

The director adopted the stakeholder group's recommendation, which was to set the statewide goal at 75% completion of all toxic use goals annually. The statewide toxic use goal will cover years 2000 through 2004. However, the stakeholder group will reevaluate the goal in January 2003 to decide if they can improve upon it. The department expects to release the first toxic use goal report, for the year 2000, in December 2001.

The Department expects that facilities will be successful in meeting the statewide toxic use reduction goal.